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U.S. Is Said to Reject Nicaraguan Linked to Killing of Somoza Aide

By STEPHEN KINZER

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MANAGUA, Nicaragua, April 18 — The United States has formally notified Nicaragua that Nora Astorga, a Deputy Foreign Minister, will not be accepted as the next Ambassador to Washington, diplomats said today.

The message was reportedly conveyed Monday by the United States Ambassador, Anthony C.E. Quainton, and was repeated today after Nicaragua had asked for reconsideration.

Miss Astorga's nomination set off opposition from American intelligence officials because of her role in the 1978 murder of an officer in the Nicaraguan National Guard commanded by the late President Anastasio Somoza Debayle. The officials said that the officer, Gen. Reynaldo Pérez Vega, had worked with the Central Intelligence Agency and that they were loath to allow anyone involved in his killing to take up a post in Washington.

Diplomats said they did not expect the dispute to grow into a major incident. The present Nicaraguan Ambassador, Antonio Jarquín, is expected to remain at least until Nicaragua selects a new candidate.

Statement Is Due Today

Neither Ambassador Quainton or Saul Arana, head of the North America Department of the Foreign Ministry, would comment on the matter. A State Department official said there would be a statement Thursday.

Miss Astorga has taken part in negotiations with Costa Rica over border disputes and has headed Nicaraguan delegations to technical meetings of the four-nation Contadora group, which is seeking a formula for peace in Central America.

When her nomination was made public a month ago, she said she expected the State Department to accept it as a matter of routine. Under diplomatic procedure, countries have the right to reject ambassador-designates, though in practice this is rarely done.

Role of Pérez Is Described

But several American officials recalled that Miss Astorga had confessed to luring General Pérez, the top officer in the National Guard, into her bedroom, where he was slain by Sandinista revolutionaries who were awaiting him. General Pérez, who had a reputation for brutality, was a strategist in the military campaign against the guerrillas, and Miss Astorga collaborated with the underground.

Nicaraguan officials said in inter-

views that General Pérez had aided the C.I.A. by providing Nicaraguan passports and other documents to cover American agents operating throughout Central America.

"He was one of the principal C.I.A. operatives in the region," said Comdr. Walter Ferretti, a guerrilla veteran who is now the Nicaraguan police chief.

After Washington officials had made known their displeasure with Miss Astorga's nomination, Interior Minister Tomás Borge said in an interview that she was qualified for the post and that rejection "would be another serious provocation by the United States."

Diplomats here said they believed that one of the reasons she had been nominated was the strength of her Sandinista convictions. During the late 1970's, she was one of more than a dozen women who played important roles in clandestine Sandinista organizing, and after the killing of General Pérez, she joined the guerrillas in the hills.

Two of the five ambassadors the Sandinistas have sent to Washington since they took power in 1979 have left their jobs amid differences with the Nicaraguan Government.

Arturo Cruz, an economist, had served on the Sandinista junta before becoming ambassador. But he found it difficult to defend press censorship and restrictions on political party activity in Nicaragua, and soon after resigning became a critic of the Sandinistas.

Mr. Cruz's successor, Francisco Fiallos, left after similar disagreements. Like Mr. Cruz, he has since expressed sympathy for groups working against the Sandinista Government.